

1641
1641
THE
PETITION
FOR THE
PRELATES
BRIEFLY EXAMINED.

VVherein you have these pleas for
Prælacy, discussed, and answered.

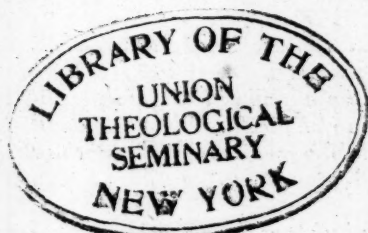
1. The pretended *Antiquitie* of Prelacy.
2. The qualitie of some men who have been Prelates, as *Martyrs*, and *Champions* for the Truth.
3. The pretended peaceable and prosperous times we have had, under Prelaticall Government.
4. The offence that many are said, will take, at the abolishing of it.
5. The pretended universall practise of the Christian World.
6. The pretended sutablenesse of it to the policy of this State.
7. The pretended disagreeing of such, who desire another Government.
8. The probability it hath from the institution by the *Apostles*, wherein by way of Answer, there are divers Arguments more then probable, to shew the unlawfullnesse of Prælacy.
9. The continuance of it for many Ages without any alteration.

The fourth Edition, Corrected according to the Authors own Coppy.

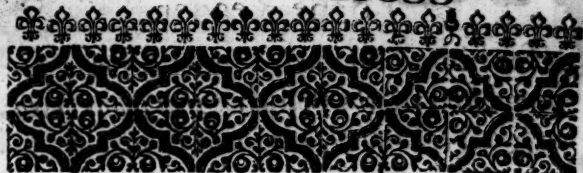
E X O D. 21. 5, 6.

If the Servant shall say, I love my Master, I will not goe out free: Then, his Master shall bring him to the dore-post, and shall bore his eare through with an Awle, and hee shall serve him for ever.

Printed in the Yeare, 1641.



NOV 17 1944



To the Reader.

I*T will seeme nothing strange, that amidst so many Petitions against Prelacy, from all the parts of the Kingdome, some one should set forth, and appeare for it ; if we consider, how many Papists and Popishly-affected have for many yeares found peace and ease under the shaddow thereof: How many members of the Prelaticall Hierachy do feeble their Foundations shaken, and their Hopes blasted ; How many Worldly-men doe feare the yoke of Christ, and shunne to be brought under the obedience of the Gospell ; And how many there be that are mistaken with the concept of the externall pompe and glory of the Church, of the Governing of the Church by the rules of humane-policy, and of the dangers which may ensue upon alterations Wee know that even Baal had the men of the Citty who plead-*

To the Reader.

ed for him: That cursed Iericho found fa-
vour with Hiel the Bethelite, that many cryed
out, great is Diana; and that the ruine of Ba-
bylon, although a matter of Halelujah to the
godly, who finde in her the blood of Prophets,
and of Saints, is bewailed and lamented by the
Marchants of the earth, and such as haue li-
ued deliciously with her. The Prelacy was of
late growne to such Greatnesse in this King-
dome, that it were a wonder, if it should not
find some to up hold it; and yet to such Insolency,
that it were a wonder, if at this opportunity, it
should not fall. Wee doe for our parts finde our
selves bound, both to warne, and call upon all
men to be wise, and to obserue the wonderfull
worke of God, lest happily they be found fight-
ing against God; and also to remoove stumbling
blocks out of the way, that the weake bee not
hindered or discouraged in praying and petition-
ing for a Reformation, which is all that is
aimed at, in these following pages.

The

THE
PRELITICAL
PETITION:

TO THE
HONORABLE,
THE
Knights, Citizens, &c.

The humble Petition of, &c.

HUMBLY SHEWETH,



HAT whereas there hath of late a Petition subscribed by manie (who pretend to be Inhabitants of this Citie) been delivered, received, and read in this HONORABLE House, against the ancient, present, and by Law established Governement of the Church, and that not so much for the Reformation of Bishops, as for the utter subversion and extirpation of Episcopacy it

selfe. We whose names are under written, to shew there bee many, and those of the better sort of the Inhabitants of this City, otherwise and better minded, doe humbly represent unto this Honourable house, these considerations following.

I. That Episcopacy is as ancient as Christianity it selfe in this Kingdome.

II. That Bishops were the chiefe instruments in the Reformation of this Church against Popery, and afterwards the most eminent Martyrs for the Protestant Religion, and since, the best and ablest Champions for the defence of it.

III. That since the Reformation, the times have been very peaceable, happy, and glorious, notwithstanding Episcopall government in the Church, and therefore that this government can be no cause of our unhappinesse.

IV. Wee conceive that not onely many learned, but diverse other Godly persons would be much scandalled and troubled in Conscience, if the government of Episcopacy, conceived by them, to be an Apostollicall institution, were altered, and since there

is so much care taken, that no man should be offended in the least Ceremony, we hope there will be some, that such mens Consciences may not be pressed upon, in a matter of an higher nature and consequence, especially considering that this government by Episcopacy, is not onely lawfull and convenient for edification, but likewise sutable and agreeable to the Civill policie and Government of this State.

V. That this Governement is lawfull, it appears by the immediate, universall and constant practice of all the Christian world grounded upon Scripture, from the Apostles time to this last Age; for above 1500. yeares together. It being utterly incredible, if not impossible, that the whole Church for so long a time, should not discover by Gods word this government to be unlawfull, if it had been so: To which may be added, that the most learned Protestants even in those very Churches, which now are not governed by Bishops, doe not only hold the government by Episcopacy to be lawfull, but wish, that they themselves might injoy it.

Againe,

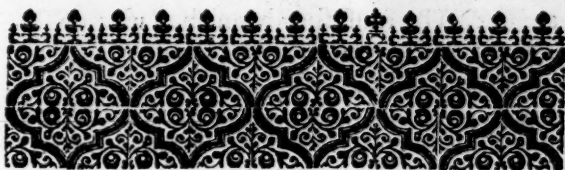
Againe, that the Government by Episcopacy is not onely lawfull, but convenient for edification, or as much, or more conducing to Piety and devotion then any other, it appeares because no modest man denies, that the primitive times were most famous for Piety, Constancy, & Perseverance in the Faith, notwithstanding more frequent & more cruel persecutions, then ever have bin since, & yet it is confessed, that the Church in those times was govern'd by Bishops.

Lastly : That the Government of the Church by Episcopacy, is most suitable to the frame and forme of the Civill government herein this Kingdome, it appeares by the happy & flourishing union of them both, for so long a time together, whereas no man can give us an assurance, how any Church government besides this (whereof wee have had so long an experience) will suite and agree with the Civill policie of this State : And we conceive it may be of dangerous consequence, for men of settled fortunes to hazzard their estates, by making so great an alteration, & venturing upon

on a new forme of Government, whereof neither we, nor our ancestors have had any tryall, or experience; especially considering that those, who would have Episcopacy to be abolished, have not yet agreed, nor (as we are verily perswaded) ever will or can agree upon any other Common forme of government to succeed in the roome of it, as appeares by the many different and contrary draughts, and platformes they have made and published, according to the severall humors and sects of those that made them, whereas, seeing every great alteration in a Church or State, must needs be dangerous, it is just and reasonable that whosoever would introduce a new form in stead of an old one, should be obliged to demonstrate and make it evidently appeare aforehand: that the Government he would introduce, is proportionably so much better, then that he would abolish, as may recompence the losse we may sustaine, & may be worthy of the hazard we must run, in abolishing the one, and in introducing and settling of the other. But this we are confident can never bee done, in regard of this particular.

And therefore our humble and earnest request to this *Honourable house* is, that as well in this consideration, as all the other aforesaid, we may still enjoy that Government, which most probably holds its institution from the *Apostles*, & most certainly its plantation with our *Christian faith* it selfe in this Kingdome, where it hath ever since flourished and continued for many ages without any interruption or alteration, whereby it plainly appeares, that as it is the most excellent government in it selfe : so it is the most futable, most agreeable, & every way most proportionable to the Civill constitutions and temper of this State : and therefore We pray & hope will alwaies be continued, & preserved in it and by it, notwithstanding the abuses and corruptions which in so long tract of time through the errors or negligence of men have crept into it, which abuses and corruptions beeing all of them (what & how many soever they may bee) but meereley accidentall to Episcopacy : We conceive and hope, there may be a Reformation of the one, without destruction of the other, which is the humble Suit of &c.

T H E



T H E
P E T I T I O N
FOR THE *P R E L A T E S*
Briefly Examined.

W*E whose names are underwritten, to shew there be many, and those of the better sort of the Inhabitants of this Citie, otherwise and better minded, doe humbly represent unto this Honourable House, these Considerations.*

Pet.

How much better these Petitioners are than the former, let not their owne judgements, but their worke determine. Wee will not examine their mindes, what they think, but their considerations, what they publish, which are:

Ans.

1. *That Episcopacy is as ancient as Christianitie it selfe in this Kingdome.*

Pet.

This is a consideration to gaine time by, how farre about must we goe to search all antiquitie, before the strength of this consideration can come

Ans. 1.

to an issue. The most speedy and best way of determining, is to goe to that which is most ancient, the certaine infallible rule.

2

In Britanniam Simonem Zelotem venisse. Niceph. l. 2. cap. 4. scribit, Josephum Arimatheensem a Philippo A-

postolo post dispersionem ex Galliis in Britanniam missum esse circa annum Dom. 63. Eumq; toto vita sua tempore in iis terris Doctrinam Christi tradidisse, Balae ex Angliis quibusdam Scriptoribus inter quos & Gildam nominat, asseverat, Cent. 1. Magdeburg. l. 2. c. 2. & Cent. 1. l. 1. c. 10.

History tells us, that Christianitie came into England by *Simon Zelotes*, and *Joseph of Arimathea*, who lived in the times of penning that Scripture, which must be the rule of our Church government; put us not off therefore with the rust of your antiquitie, but give us the gold of divine truth.

3

Nenn. Hist. Brit.

Eusebius l. 5. c. 16.

Theod. l. 5. c. 4. Jerom. Tom. 1. 5.

If wheresoever mention is made of Bishops in the History of Antiquitie, you bring it to prove the lawfulness of your Bishops in controversie, you abuse the Reader; for we say that Bishops indeed are ancient, but such Bishops as the Scriptures speake of, namely, Presbyters in severall Congregations. *St. Patrick* in his time had founded in *Ireland* three hundred sixty five Churches, and ordeined so many Bishops. *Eusebius* tells us of one *Zoticus*, Bishop of the Village of *Comanbind*; *Theodore* of *Mares* Bishop of a small towne called *Solichu*; *Ferome* of *Asclepias* Bishop of a small towne in *Africa*. What Antiquitie relates concerning the government of Churches within themselves, and how smaller Churches in villages came to be under the power of Pastors of greater Churches in Cities, is very observable. Thus we find

find it written. The policy of the Churches was like that of members in one body, where all suffer together, and are helpfull each to other: hence we have so many Epistles of Churches and Teachers writ to others, which came neither from subjection or authoritie, but from love and desire of edifying; but because the light of the Gospel, set vp in some one Citie, by little and little did inlighten the lesser Townes adjacent, therefore those Churches did acknowledge and reverence that Citie, from whence the light of the Gospel sprung to them, as their Mother; and did consult with the Officers thereof in controversies and things pertaining to the Church; and if any thing were not well done, they did admonish and freely rebuke one another, and friendly subject each to other. Those that exceld in gifts Lorded it not over others, but ministred unto them; but those Churches where the Apostles and other eminent men taught, were of great esteeme and honored accordingly. But this custome afterwards grew to a Law, as appeares by the Nicene Councell, where some Churches, with their Bishops, are made subject by a Law, and compeld to obey some other one Church and her Bishop. And in this age, namely, the second Century, the Story sayth, It cannot be shewed by the testimony of any approved Author, that of so many Churches as were planted by the Apostles, any one did arrogate su-

Erat sane tum talis politia in Ecclesijs sicut membrorum in uno corpore, ubi omnia uni compatiuntur, prospiciunt ac medentur, hinc sunt tot Epistole aliarum Ecclesiarum et doctorum, ad alias scripte, quae non ex imperio aut subiectione quadam proficiscerentur, sed ex charitate et edificandi studio. Quum vero lux Evangelii in una aliqua Civitate accensa paulatim vicinas urbes & oppidula illuminabat, & ex bene constitutis ecclesijs, ubi erant doctores eruditione pietate & constantia infantes semina prodibant, & quasi coloniae Christianae deducebantur, inde et Ecclesiae quasi ma-

orem agnoscebant, haec vero consuetudo juxta verbum Dei observata, hoc saeculo & sequenti in legem abiit, ut in Niceno Concilio, &c. Magdeburg. Cent. 12. cap. 7.

periority over others, by divine or Apostolicall authoritie, neither did other Churches acknowledge, or honour any one of them as superiour, whose Bishop should have power to appoint Ceremonies or make Decrees, to which all should be bound.

4

Vid. Pager. Christianographie, where the Authors are cited.

The Constitution of Diocesan Bishops in *England*, was first in imitation of the Heathens, who had their Arch-Flamins, and Flamins, in stead whereof that the Christians might gaine them to theire Religion, the seate of the Arch-Flamins of *London, York, and Chester*, were changed into the seates of three Archbishops, and of the Flamins into the seates of Bishops; and one *Devotus* Bishop of *Winchester*, had all the possessions of the Pagan-Flamins, even twelve miles compasse round about the Citie conferrd upon him and his Clergie, in which were contained thirty-two Villages.

5

Polyd. de invent. l. 4. c. 9.

The Christian world knew no Dioceses made up of many Parishes, till the yeare 267. as *Polidore Virgil* testifies, therefore Diocesan Bishops cannot be so ancient as Christianitie in *England*.

6

Suppose Bishops were so ancient, as you pretend, yet they may be Anchristian, because the Scripture tells us, that Antichrist began to work in the Apostles time.

Pet.

2. That Bishops were the chiefe instruments in the reformation of the Church against Popery.

Ans. I.

That some good men should not see the evill of Episcopacy in the darknesse of Popery, it is no marvaile.

2

If their places were therefore good, because the men

men were instruments of reformation, then now their places are naught, because they are Inlets and instruments of so much corrupting Innovation.

Most of the Bishops then were the chiefe hinderers of the reformation, witnesse *Martin Bucer* in a speech of his to King *Edward*, Your Majesty (saith he) doth see, that this restoring againe the kingdome of Christ, which we require, yea, which the salvation of us all requireth, may in no wise be expected to come of the Bishops, seeing there be so few among them which doe understand the power and proper offices of this kingdome, and very many of them, by all meanes (which possibly they can and dare.) either oppose themselves against it, or defer and hinder it.

*Martin Bucer
de regno Christi.
li. l. 2. c. 1.*

Had not King *Edward*, though young, set his heart for Reformation more than the best of the Bishops, it had never proceeded so farre as it did, when *Cranmer* and *Ridley* pressed him to permit his Sister the Lady *Mary* to have Masse in her house, the King having heard what they could say, replied out of the Scriptures so fully, that they were inforced to give place to his replication, and grant the same to be true. Then they after long debating with his Majestie in this manner, laboured politiquely in another sort, and alledged what dangers the denying thereof might bring to his Grace, what breach of amitie on the Emperours part, what troubles, what unkindnesses, and what occasions sundry wayes it would inforce; unto whom the King answered, willing them to content

content themselves, for he would, he said, spend his life, and all he had, rather than to agree and grant to that he knew to be against the truth. The which when the Bishops heard, notwithstanding they urged him still to grant, and would by no meanes have his nay. Then the good King seeing their importunate suite, in the end his tender heart bursting out into bitter weeping and sobbing, he desired them to be content; whereat the Bishops wept as fast as he, and acknowledged, the good King had more Divinitie in his little finger, than they had in all their bodies.

*Fox Marty-
rol. in Edw. 6.
p. 653. edit.
1631.*

Per.

Ans. 1.

3. *Bishops were most eminent Martyrs.*

Of many Bishops there were some few Martyrs, but what Bishops were they? *Latimer* upon the comming forth of the six Articles in King *Henry* the eight his time, did freely and of his own accord, resigne his Bishoprick, and when he put off his Rochet, suddenly he skipped for joy, feeling his shoulders so light, being discharged (as he said) of so heavy a burden, and gloried in the title of a *Quondam. Hooper* was another, and he made supplication to the King, desiring his Highnesse either to discharge him of the Bishoprick, or els to dispence with him of such ceremoniall orders, as were required of him. Also concerning Ceremonies, he saith thus; Behold how fearfull a thing it is, though the intent be never so good, even to adorne and beautifie the Institutions, Decrees, and Ordinances of God, with any device of man, without the appointment of God in his Word; yea, it is no lesse abominable in the sight of

*Acts and Mon.
de Hoopero.*

*Epist. to King
Edw. 6.*

of God, then if a man should accuse him of ignorance and foolishnesse. Speaking of the Supper Serm 6. ibid. of the Lord, he saith, The outward preparation plura. the more simple it is, the better it is, and the nearer the institution of Christ and his Apostles. If you have Bread, Wine, a Table, and a faire Table-cloth, be not solicitous and carefull for the rest, seeing they are things brought in, not by Christ, but by Popes. He also speaketh expressly against kneeling at the Lords Supper, the Surplesse, with Serm 1. upon Iudas. all the monuments, tokens, and leavings of Papistry, and that Excommunication should not bee done by the Bishops alone, but by the Bishop and Serm. 3. and in his Declar. of the eighth Command. all the Parish.

Ridley also, when they put on his Episcopall AAs & Mon. robes for his degradation, he vehemently inveighed against that apparell, calling it foolish and abominable, yea too fond for a vice in a play.

Bishop *Farrer* was another Martyr, and he was AAs & Mon. so strongly set against their superstitious ceremonies, that they made an article against him for refusing to weare a square cap.

What Bishops have you more that were Martyrs except *Cranmer*? & you see what manner of men these were, and by that little taste of their non-conformity, you may judge they would have been as forward to the work of Reformation as any other had they lived in these times.

If some Bishops being Martyrs, argues the goodnesse of their place, then other Bishops being persecutors of the Martyrs, as *Donner* and *Gardner*, argues the evill of their places.

3

A& and Mon.
p. 733. Edit.
1631.

If you account so highly of the testimony of Martyrs, heare what that famous Martyr the Lord Cobham in Henry 5. his time saith, That the Pope is the great head of Antichrist, the Priests and Prelates, and Monkes the body, and Friers the taile.

Pet.

4. *And since were the best Champions for the defence of it.*

Answer. 1.

The most famous Champions we have had in England for the truth, have been such as have either been fully against Bishops, or that have held Presbyters and Bishops to be all one.

Cited out of
Master Fox by
Caymigh in
his second Re-
ply against
Worship, p. 526

Doctor Barnes was condemned for saying thus, I wil never beleeeve, nor can ever beleeeve, that one may by the law of God be Bishop of two or three Cities, yea of a whole Countrey; for that it is contrary to the doctrine of S. Paul, who writing unto Titus, commandeth that he should ordaine a Bishop in every Towne.

Master Tindall in his book of the obedience of a Christian man, pag. 114. saith, As thou canst heale no disease, except thou begin at the root, so canst thou preach against no mischief, except thou begin at the Bishops. Moreover, in his defence of the English translation, hee saith, These over-seers which now wee call Bishops after the Greek word, were alwayes abiding in one place, to governe the congregation there.

Doctor Reynolds, as great a Champion for the truth, as any of the Prelates, in his Letter to Sir Francis Knowles, requiring his resolution, whether the authority Bishops have amongst us, bee
Gods

Gods owne ordinance, answereth negatively, and proveth at large by Writers old and new, that the now Archbishop Doctor *Bancroft*, was in an error for preaching otherwise.

Doctor *Fulk* against the *Rhemists* upon *Titus* the 1. 5. affirmeth, that albeit for order and seemly government, there was alwayes one principall, to whom by long use of the Church the name Bishop was applied; yet in the Scripture a Bishop and an Elder is of one order and authority.

Doctor *Whitaker* in his answer to *Campion* his ten reasons, sayes, that *jure divino*, a Presbyter and Bishop are both one, and if *Aerius* were an heretick for saying so, *Ierome* certainly was a kin to the same heresie.

Resp. ad Camp.
10. vol.

Wee might produce many others, as Doctor *Humphrey Holland*, *Beacon*, *Bale*, *Fox*, *Bradford*, and others which of necessity we forbear, to prevent tediousnesse. Onely one who himselfe was a Bishop, and one of the chiefe Champions against Papists, yet acknowledged Episcopacie not to be by divine right; for citing a place out of *Austin*, affirming that the office of a Bishop is above the office of a Priest, after the names of honour which the custome of the Church hath now attained, hee addes himselfe, but not by the authority of the Scripture; where also hee consents to that of

Jewel defence
Per. 2. c. 3. di.
vif. 5.

Ierome, Let Bishops understand, that they are above Priests, rather of custome then of any truth or right of Christs Institution; and this he doth in opposition to *Harding*, pleading superiority of Bishops.

Pet.

Since the Reformation the times have been very peaceable, happy and glorious, notwithstanding Episcopall government.

Answer. 1.

To whom have the times been so? Indeed Bishops and their Creatures have lived in pompe, but how many hundreds of faithfull laborious Ministers have been cast out from all their means of livelihood, themselves and their families put to lamentable extremities? how many have been imprisoned, and brought to untimely ends there? How many have been driven out of their deare Countrey? What reproaches and contempt hath been cast upon those that remaine? no reformed Church in all the world can shew such lamentable miseries, that their Ministers and people have been put unto for their Consciences, and that in things of as low a nature, as in England can be shewed.

2.

For that prosperity wee have had, no thanks to Bishops; for the lower Bishops were, as in Queen *Elizabeths* time, the greater was our prosperity; But since the Bishops grew to that height (they were lately in) our prosperity hath been as much lessened; witnesse the lamentable complaints and out-cries of the whole Kingdome against the miseries caused by them; If the lower they were, the more prosperous we were, then if they were not at all, we may very well expect more prosperity then ever.

This argument of prosperity is the same that heathens brought against Christians, one *Symmachus* against whom *Prudentius* writ an Epistle to
Theodosius

Theodosius the Emperour, used this argument to perswade continuance in the old Religion of the Romanes, because their Common-wealth had been most fully flourishing all the time they worshipped *Imper, Apollo*, and their other Gods. So likewise the heathen persecuters of Christians used to say, when any evil befell them: Now are we not so fortunate as wee were wont to bee, because we suffer the Christians, and because wee worship not our Gods with that zeale as formerly.

Whitak. de
Ecclef. cont.
2. q. 5. c. 16.

6. *We conceive that many learned and godly persons would be much scandalized and troubled in conscience, if the government by Episcopacie were altered.* Per.

We confesse in things indifferent, that governours in commanding, and all men in practising, ought to be very carefull in giving offence; the Scripture layes downe Rules for ordering us in things indifferent, which bind Governours as well as others. The Apostles had as much authority in the Church, as ever any since, and yet they durst not enjoyne a thing indifferent, which was offensive, but comended it necessary to abstain from that which was offensive, though in its owne nature indifferent, as in the matter of eating bloud, *Act. 15*. But in such things wherein we are not at all left to our liberty, the rules of offence take no place; If any will bee offended for doing our duty, wee must not therefore forbear.

Answer 1.

The keeping in of Bishops in these times wherein God so clearly opposes them, will be the greatest

2.

test offence that ever was given to the people of England, and other reformed Churches, and a special hardning of our adversaries, even the Papists themselves, who doe extreamely contend for Episcopacie to be *jure divino*, witnesse that Booke of *Franciscus à Sancta Clara*, called *Apologia pro Episcopis*; and that Canon of the Councell of ^a Trent, If any man shall say, that Bishops are not above Presbyters, let him be *Anathema*. And that you may see what a dangerous offence it is, consider what mischievous inferences they make from thence; As that the Ministers of all Reformed Churches (where Episcopacy is not) are no true Ministers, and their Ministry to be altogether invalid, and their Churches to be no true Churches; witnesse that of *Iansenius*, cited by *Voetius*; ^b The Bishop onely may call and ordaine Elders, and whosoever in case of necessity should be ordained by the Church and Presbyters, he is no Presbyter, and his whole Ministry is invalid. Also that of the Papists, cited by *Gerardus*, who saith thus, 'The Papist laying this foundation, that Bishops are above Presbyters *jure divino*, doe inferre, that *Luther* had no power of ordaining Ministers, because he was no Bishop, but onely a Presbyter, and by consequence, that there are no true Ministers in our Churches. And no marvaile, if Papists say so abroad, when our late Archprelate in

^a Si quis dixerit Episcopos non esse Presbyteris superiores Anathema sit. Concil. Trident. Sess. 23. c. 4.

Pontificii existimant, Episcopus Presbyteris jure divino quoad potestatem tum ordinis tum jurisdictionis superiores esse. Gerard. de minist. Ecclesiastico.

^b Solus Episcopus potest vocare & ordinare presbyteros, & quicunque in statu necessitatis ab Ecclesia & presbyterio fuerit ordinatus non est Presbyter.

& invalidum est omne ejus ministerium. Voet Desperat. caus. Pop. l. 2. c. 9. c Unde porro inferunt Lutherum non habuisse potestatem alios ministros ordinandi cum non fuit Episcopus, sed duntaxat presbyter & per consequens nullos hodie in Ecclesiis nostris esse veros ministros. Gerard. de ministerio Ecclesiastico.

open Court at home called reverend Master Calvin Rascall, and said of those Protestant Churches, that they were no Churches, because they had no Bishops; now what a scandall this is, let the world judge.

7. *That Episcopacie is not onely lawfull, but convenient for edification.* Pet.

What edification have wee by Bishops, unlesse edification of Altars, Images, and Popery? but for edification of soules by the word, who are greater enemies the reunto than Bishops? Preaching twice a day is sufficient to put a conformable Minister into their black bill; yea, to suspend him from his Ministry. In catechising they forbid any further exposition than the giving the bare grammaticall sense of their forme. And for Prayer, wherein the Apostle makes it a chief work of the Ministers of the Gospell, to give themselves to Prayer, as wel as the Ministry of the Word, they will suffer no other than reading in a booke, and saying over the fifty fift Canon. Answer I.
AAs 6.

In other reformed Churches, where are no Bishops, in every congregation there is a preaching Minister; but for England, where is now a settled maintenance for the Ministry, and as many able men as in any other place; yet there are divers thousands of congregations without a preaching Ministry; and for one Sermon they preach themselves, they hinder many hundreds. It is little good that Prelates doe in this kinde. More of God and his Kingdome hath appeared in some one congregation, where a Minister hath beene whom

whom they have silenced or deprived, than in all the Bishops families in England; could any godly Minister indure such a Parish as Lambeth is, if he had such power to reforme as the Arch-Prelate had?

- 3 When the Parliament hath examined what men the Prelates have put into places, it will appeare what edification people have had by their means; what places have been more miserably provided for in all the Kingdome, than those that Prelates and Cathedralls have had the disposing of. Neither hath this been thorough some particular personall corruptions, but the whole Kingdome can witnesse, how generally this hath been ever since the reformation; and if this bee your edification, wee beseech the Lord in mercie to deliver us from it.

Pet. 8. Episcopacie is susable and agreeable to the civill policie and government of this State.

Ans. 1. What is by divine institution, is agreeable to all States, and what is against it cannot bee agreeable to any Christian government.

- 2 We see by our neighbours how agreeable it hath been to civill government; hath it not endangered to bring all things into confusion amongst them?

- 3 Wee our selves have had full experience, how the Prelates and that faction have stopped the course of Law, and lifted up themselves above it. Priests in Parishes above the Magistrates there, and Bishops above the Nobles. The government of our Kingdome is by Parliamentary and Common

on Law, but they seeke to rule against e
 [a]ppares by their Commission, which they have
 mit for the high Commission. In the copy where-
 of these are their words; That you our said Com-
 passioners, and every of you, shall diligently and
 faithfully execute this our Commission, and every
 part and branch thereof, in manner and forme a-
 foresaid, and according to the true meaning there-
 of, notwithstanding any appellation, provocation,
 priviledge, or exemption, in that behalfe to be had,
 made, pretended or alledged by any person, or
 persons, resident or dwelling in any place, or pla-
 ces, exempt, or not exempt, within these our
 Realmes of *England*, and *Ireland*, and Dominion
 of *Wales*, any our Lawes, Statutes, Proclamations,
 or other Grants, Priviledges, or Ordinances,
 which be or may seeme contrary to the premisses
 notwithstanding.

King *Philip* the husband of Queen *Mary*, thought
 it so inconsistent with Civill government by the
 Nobility, that upon his death-bed calling his
 sonne unto him, he gave him this counsell; If
 you intend to rule by your Nobles. keepe your
 Bishops low, and if you would rule by your Bi-
 ships, keepe your Nobles low. What disturbance
 in Civill States this power of Prelates with Kings
 hath made, our *English* Records doe sufficiently
 testifie, which no true English spirit can reade or
 relate without a sadned spirit. *Mathew Paris*, in
 his History tells us of the great power that *Peter*
 Bishop of *winchester*, and *Peter Rival*, the Bishops
 Cousen, with other adherents, had with K. H. 3.

Great complaints were made, that by their counsell the Kings heart was turned from the love of his subjects, and the hearts of them from him, and discord was sown amongst them; and that by the said counsell of the foresaid Bishop and his fellows, King *John* the Kings Father, lost first the hearts of his Barons, after that lost *Normandy*, and after that other Lands also, and in the end wasted all his treasure, and the Kingdome for a long time after had no quiet. By the said counsell also, *England* that was the Prince of Provinces, became Tributary. Moreover, through their wicked counsell, saith the Story, at this presence, great perturbation seemed to hang over the Realme; for if it had not bene for their counsell, and if that true justice and judgement might have bene administered unto the Kings subjects, these tumults had never bene stirred, and the King might have had his Land unwasted, and his treasure unconfirmed. The said Bishop impiously tels the Nobles, that the King right-well might call unto him what forreiners and strangers he listed, by whom he might be able to bridle his proud and rebellious subjects, and so to keepe them in aw and good order: Whereupon the Nobles in great perturbation departed, promising amongst themselves in this case, which touched the state of the whole Realme, they would constantly joyne together, even unto death.

The great divisions in the Common-Wealth, presently after *Constantines* time, were made by the Bishops. which the Historians of those times doe plentifully testifie.

This

This is not our judgement alone, heare what Master Tindall saith in his booke of Christian obedience; Woe unto the Realmes where Bishops are of the Kings Councell; as profitable are they verily unto the Realmes with their Counsells, as wolues unto the sheep, or the foxes unto the geese.

In France the Reformed Churches not under Bishops, are as good and faithfull subjects unto their Prince, and so acknowledged by himselfe, though of another Religion, as any hee hath. Hence it appears, that that government which is not Prelaticall, may stand with the peace and civill order of a State as well as it.

9. *That this government is lawfull, appears by the immediate and constant practice of all the Christian world grounded upon Scripture from the Apostles time to this last age, for above fifteene hundred yeares together.*

To that which they say, its grounded upon Scripture, wee shall speak afterwards, but to say that this was the practice of all the Christian world for fifteene hundred yeares, is a bold assertion. Wee finde in History that the Church of Scotland was not governed by Bishops till betweene foure or five hundred yeares after Christ, although it had flourished in the Christian Religion two or three hundred yeares before.

Wee answer as before, its true indeed, that in all times for fifteene hundred yeares there were Bishops, but in this time of the Apostles and presently after, Bishops were much different from that they are now as

1. Then they were Parochiall not Diocesan.
2. Even in those times when Episcopacy began to grow to some height, yet the election of Bishops was by the whole Church, but it is not so now.
3. There was not that superiority of them over other Ministers as there is now.
4. They challenged not the power of Ordination and Church censures to themselves, as now they doe.

These foure wee undertake now to shew you briefly, because ere long you shall have them discussed more largely upon another occasion.

For the first, Bishops were Parochiall not Diocesan; for there were Bishops of Villages and small Townes, as *Sozomen* in his seventh booke testifies; and according to *Eusebius*, Churches wherein were Bishops, were called Parishes, *lib. 3. 44. lib. 4. ep. 25. l. 2. c. 6.*

Ignatius saith, Every Church should have her Communion Table, and every Church her Bishop.

And *Cyprian* saith, The bounds of a Church were not greater than a Bishop might call together the whole multitude about the affaires of it.

For the second; These Bishops were chosen by the whole Church. *Ambrose* saith, That is truly and certainly a divine Election of a Bishop, which is made by the whole Church.

Plinius tells us, that *Ludovicus* the second commanded by his Letters, that the Romans should choose their owne Bishop, not looking for stran-

gers to meddle in it, for it belonged to the Citizens.

Ambrose complaines to *Nepotianus* of the great disorder in the clergy, that they run to Bishops Suffragans; certaine times of the yeare, and bringing chosen of none; And the Bishop without any lawfull Election is chosen in private of the Canons or Prebendaries onely, without the knowledge of the people.

For the third: They had not superiority over other Ministers, as they have now.

The Helvetian Confess. 5. 12. hath these words, Equall power is given to all Ministers of the Church: from the beginning no one preferred himselfe before another, saving onely for order, some one did call them together, propounded the matters that were to be consulted of, and gathered the voices.

The honour of a Bishop being taken from the rest of the Ministers, and given to one, was the first step to Papacy.

Power of Ordination belonged likewise to Presbyters, for besides the evidence of Scripture; the third Canon of the Councell of *Carthage* sayes; The Bishop giving the blessing, let all the Elders there present lay on their hands.

That they had not the power of Church censures to themselves, *Cyprian* saith, that the Presbyters and other Church Officers have a swell power to absolve, as the Bishop. And in another place, for as much as absolution belongs unto all, I alone dare not doe it.

And

And *Augustine*, it helpeth much to make the party more ashamed, that he be excommunicated by the whole Church.

Ierome, The Elders have interest in other censures of the Church, and the Church it selfe in excommunication.

Now if there be such difference betweene our Bishops and the former, why do you againe bring their antiquitie? your repetition leads us in our answer to come againe to the same thing; may not all see how egregiously you seeke to deceive the Reader with great words, in pretending that Diocesan Bishops were of so long standing, because Bishops were. Wee see by this deceit, how dangerous it is to take words that are common to many things, and appropriate them to a particular, if it once gaine the appropriation of a name or title, it will soone challenge the thing it selfe, and the keeping up the name after it hath been abused, will keepe up the thing it selfe, and therefore no marvaile though men contend so much for keeping the name of Bishops. We finde in the notes of the Rhemists upon that place, 1 *Tim.* 6. v. 20. They contend much for the keeping then old termes, let us keep our forefathers words, say they, and wee shall easily keep our old faith; let them say amendment, let us say penance, let them say the Lords Supper, let us say the Masse, let them say the Communion Table, let us say the Altar, let them say Elders, Ministers, let us say Priest, let them say Superintendent, let us say Bishop, &c. They and wee all have experience
whar

what power words and names have, the spirit of these Rhemists have been lately in many of our men, they began to alter the former language, but told you at first, they meant no hurt by the words and names they upon things, and now in this controversy about Episcopacy, their chief prevailing Argument, is the very word Bishop, which we acknowledge to be a Scripture word, but applied so as they doe, to a certaine kind of superior Officer in the Ministry of their owne devising, when God gives it to all Ministers of the Gospell; this we say hath much evill in it, and the retaining of it, in this sense, is very dangerous.

10. *The most learned Protestants in those Churches which now are not governed by Bishops, doe not onely hold the government to be lawfull, but wish that they themselves may enjoy it.*

This is boldly said, but we know the quite contrary to be true, both by their writings and by those that have lived amongst them. Gerard, in whom wee may see the mind of the Reformed Churches, as much as in any, saith; Wee doe not acknowledge any inequality of jurisdiction that Bishops have over Presbyters *jure divino*, seeing the contrary may be gathered out of Scriptures, as from *Act. 20. 17. 18.* and divers other places by him cited. He also brings the testimony of *Ierome, Ambrose, Austin, Sedulius, Primasius, Chrysostomus, Theodoret, Occumenius, and Theophylact*, and answers the contrary Arguments of *Bellarmino. Chamierus* also who fully knew the mind of the

the reformed Churches, saith thus: That in the first beginning of the Churches, there were no such Bishops as were afterwards instituted, to wit, such as *suo jure* were over the Clergy, such saith he, were not instituted by Christ and his Apostles, and because that is best which is first, it were better for the Churches, if they were allesteemed to be of equall right and degree; and when that distinct order of the Bishops from the Presbyters was first brought in, the Bishops were not the Monarchs of the Church, nor had power over the Clergy, but onely some of the chiefe were chosen to goe before others in deliberation and composing of matters. And lest you should thinke the judgement of the the Divines of the Reformed Churches to be altered, take what *Voetius* Professor of *Vtrecht* hath formerly writ, and of late said What he hath writ, you may read in his learned Tractate *de desparata causa Papatus*; where amongst much against Episcopacy, he hath these passages; We have more than abundantly proved, that pretended Episcopacy is not *jure divino*. Again, either we are heriticks in this point; or the Fathers and Doctors are heriticks with us. And that you might not flatter your selves in conceiting, that the reformed Churches wish for your government, he saith, we who have not that order of Bishops, stand not in need of them from the *English*. And for his speech; when Bishop *Halls* book in defence of Episcopacy came forth, he said What will this poore fellow doe? he hath of late read many Lectures against the superiority and jurisdiction of the Bishops.

11. *Again, the government of Episcopacy, &c.*

Pet.

Here you repeat the argument of Antiquitie againe, and cry up your great *Wants*, but concerning the Episcopacy of the Primitive times, we have said enough before. The bringing this over againe, with so faire a glosse, is but to deceive the World.

Ans.

12. *That the government of the Church by Episcopacy, is most suitable to the frame of the Civill government in this Kingdome, appears by the happy and flourishing union of them both for so long a time together.*

Pet.

Considering what persecutions and distractions there have been in both Kingdomes, by meanes of them, neither wee nor the other Kingdome have cause to boast much of flourishing happinesse.

Ans. I.

What good hath been by the union of the Kingdomes, cannot be attributed to the Prelates; but what evill hath come by the disunion, hath been apparantly by them.

I. 2.

13. *No man can give us assurance, how any Church government besides this will sute well with the civill policy of this State.*

Pet.

Whatsoever we desire in this kinde, is no other then according to the Word, and wee and you may assure our selves, that so long as wee walke according to that rule, peace shall be upon us; and upon the Israell of God.

Ans. I.

This is an argument, Pagans have used against the Christians, wee have worshipped our Gods all this while, and if we bring in any new way of worship, we know not what the issue will be.

2
Vid. Whitaker de Eccles. ut supra.

E

Wee

3 Wee are already sure that Episcopall government hath been a wofull trouble and disturbance to ours and other States, as hath been shewed before,

Pet. 14. *We conceive it may be of dangerous consequence, for men of settled fortunes to hazard their estates, &c.*

Ans. This seems to be a threatning clause, as if some mischievous thing were intended by the Episcopall party, futable to the expression of one who labouring to promote the petition, urged it with this argument, that there would be no living for men in *England*, unless they would subscribe to it.

Pet. 15. *Those who would have Episcopacy abolished, have not yet agreed, nor as wee are perswaded ever can or will agree upon any other common forme of Government.*

Ans. 1. If Episcopacy were gone, the agreement would be easie; as we see in *Scotland*, while Episcopacy was amongst them, there was no small disagreement, but since the removall thereof, they are of one heart and minde.

2 There is no government in any Reformed Church, from which there are so many rents, under which there are so many divisions, as that government of Episcopacy which wee have in *England*.

3 Many men are afraid to discover themselves freely, for feare if Episcopacy hold, it will be hereafter revenged upon them, having had so much experience of the cruelty of men in that place, whereas if it were downe, they would be

more

more free to shew their opinions, and to close with their brethren in the truth.

Reformed Churches in all places doe agree, and why should not wee thinke there would be agreement amongst us, if Episcopacy were removed?

They who seeme most to differ, yet they differ not one from another so much, as they all differ from Episcopacy. They professe one to another, that they can walke as brethren together in enjoying communion one with another in peace and love.

You seeme to rejoyce in the supposall of dissensions between others, thinking thereby to gaine time, but that you may see, there is not so vast a difference amongst us as you think, in these things wee are all agreed.

Church discipline is to be learned from the plaine and perfect Word of God, and in such particulars as are common to the Church with other Societies, is to be directed by the light of nature, the Church observing alwayes the generall rules of the Word.

A particular Church consisteth of such as in the use of the ordinances of Christ, doe joyne together in one body and societie, to walke in all the wayes of Christ; neither are there any other members of a particular Church, but such as in profession are beleevers and Saints.

The Church may have no office nor office-bearers, but such as are by divine appointment, which are Elders or Deacons, or more particular-

19, Pastors, Teachers, Elders, and Deacons, by which Christ hath provided for all the necessities of the Church.

Although the civill and Ecclesiasticall government be different kindes of governments, yet it is a principall part of the civill Magistrate, who is keeper of both Tables, to have a care of the Church, and to exercise his authoritie for the preserving of Religion, and for the peace and safety of the Church, and where the Magistrate doth his dutie, it is a speciall blessing of God, and he is to be obeyed in all things lawfull.

Each particular Church hath her owne power and authoritie, and the use and benefit of all the Ordinances of Christ, neither is there any thing to be done without the expresse or tacite consent of the Congregation, in matters which are proper and peculiar to a particular Church, whether in election or ordination of Ministers, or in admitting or excommunicating of members.

It is in many respects expedient both for the members of each Church, whether Ministers or people, and for the right governing and well-being of the particular Churches in a Nation professing Christian Religion, that besides their particular assemblies and Elderships, they convene by their Commissioners, Ministers, and Elders in greater Assemblies, that matters that concerne all the Churches within their bounds respective, may with common advice and consent be agreed upon for their good and edification.

16. It is just and reasonable, that whosoever would introduce a new forme, should be obliged to demonstrate aforehand, that the government he would introduce, be much better than the other, and able to recompence the losse thereof.

Pet.

There can be no losse of an evill, and therefore you need not call for a recompence either before or after, seeing Prelacy is an evill, as wee have proved and shall prove, it is neither to be recompensed, nor moderated, nor reserved, but presently and wholly to be taken away, what ever the consequence may be. The presence of an error hinders men from seeing the truth; if the government be for the present hurtfull, and the exercise mischievous to others, we need not, wee ought not to spare it till we know what shall come in the roome.

Ans. 1.

And further we all see a platforme before us amongst our brethren in the reformed Churches, which we conceive would give satisfaction in the maine, being according to the former six Propositions, and what alteration is to be made in such things wherein one reformed Church differs from another, the same may be effected with more peace, than the Episcopacy can be continued.

2

17. Wee may still enjoy that government, which most probably holds its institution from the Apostles.

Pet.

Wee are glad you suspect your cause so farre, having no other than a sandy foundation of probability; what an evill is it that so many thousands have suffered such fore things, in soules and bodies, in estates, liberties, and names, for meere

Ans.

probabilities; we blesse God we have more to say for our cause against Episcopacy than probabilities, and our reasons from Scripture are these.

1 The whole charge of all the affaires of the Church of *Ephesus* was left to the Elders, *Act. 20.* where Saint *Paul* tells them, that the holy Ghost had made them overseers over that flocke which they were *superintendunt*, and the word signifies in the judgement of all, both to feed and to rule.

2 Whatsoever you make to belong to Episcopacy, as Episcopacy, is either matter of jurisdiction, or ordination. Jurisdiction doth not belong to the Bishop; for our Saviour Christ saith, *Go tell the Church*, which Church to interpret of one man, is against that place, because he saith, *Whatsoever yee binde*, against the course of Scripture, because one man is never cald a Church, and against common sense, because the word *Church*, there signifies an assembly. And for Ordination, the Apostle saith unto *Timothy*, *The gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the Presbyterie*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. therefore Ordination also belongs unto the Elders.

3 Wee finde no rules, nor instructions in Scripture for the ordering of Bishops, as distinguished from other Elders, Pastors, and Teachers; and therefore wee cannot beleieve, that there is any such distinct office: *Indicent nobis loca*, as *Voetius* speakes, let them shew us those places of Scripture, where is that peculiar Ministry, and where are those special instructions which belong to the Bishops alone, and not unto other Pastors?

*Voetius caus.
desperat. Pap.
l. 2. scilicet. 1 a.*

We

We finde in the judgement of the holy Ghost, that a Bishop and Elder are all one, as appears *Acts* 20. by comparing the seventeenth verse with the twenty eight; those that are called Elders in the seventeenth, are called Bishops in the twenty eight; which the *English* translates *Overseers*, and onely here. * So *Titus* 1. 5. compared with the 7. where those who are said to be Elders in the fifth verse, are each of them called a Bishop in the seventh; otherwise there should be no force in the Particle, *For*. This is the arguing of the Apostle, ordaine Elders, vers. 5. if any be blamelesse, vers. 6. for a Bishop must be blamelesse, vers. 7.

4

* Ex hoc loco manifestū, eodē dem dictū ē fuisse Episcopos qui dicebantur, & erant presbyteri, alias nulla foret in textu Apostolico conexio, quam tamen particula

discretē ponit, quæ enim eundem hoc foret? Illi constituendi sunt Presbyteri qui sunt sine crimine, unius uxoris viri, quia Episcopum cujus officium, potestas, jurisdictio & gradus differt à presbytero oportet esse sine crimine, unius uxoris virum. Gerard. de ministerio Ecclesiastico.

One Bishop now hath Jurisdiction over diverse Counties and hundreds of Churches, but in the Apostles times, there were diverse Bishops in every Citie. *Titus* 1. 5. Elders in every Citie; who (as we have proved before) are the same with Bishops, *Phil.* 1. 1. *Bishops* and *Deacons* at *Philippi*; Its certaine in these places they were not all Christians, it is most likely, very few of them, and yet those few had divers Bishops set over them; other kinde of Bishops than these the Scripture knows not. Yet in these times the Elders had extraordinary gifts, as appears *James* the first, where the Apostle sets downe a rule for all Churches in those times, that when any was sick,

5

sick, the Elders should anoint him with oyle, and so he should recover; if then Elders had then miraculous gifts, and yet there were divers appointed for every Citie, then it cannot be conceived, that now when Elders have no such extraordinary gifts, yet that one should be set over many Counties, it may be thousands of Congregations.

The Scripture acknowledgeth no Superioritie or inferioritie between Officers of the same kinde. One Apostle was not over another, nor one Evangelist over another, nor one Prophet over another (indeed the Scripture saith, the spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets, but this subjection was mutuall, one not having more power over another, than that other had over him) neither is one Deacon over another; and what colour of reason can be given, that one Pastour or Teacher should have power over another.

7 There is no mention in Scripture of any under an Apostle or Evangelist, that did performe any work of office in any place but in his owne particular Church; the Apostles and Evangelists, which are made distinct officers in the 4th of the *Ephesians*, had their Commission generall for all places without any limitation; but in this latitude of their Commission, they have no successours. There was no place where Apostles or Evangelists came, but they had the same power, which we suppose none of our Bishops dare arrogate to themselves. If therefore they succeed not Apostles

files and Evangelists in the largeness of their Commission, then their succession must be of those Pastors and Teachers, whom wee finde the holy Ghost hath set over particular Congregations.

If Church Officers be not limited to severall Congregations, then there is no limitation by any divine Institution, and if so, then a Pastor may have many, yea, all Churches in the world under him, and so the Popedome must be granted at most inconvenient, and not against any divine Institution. If it should be said, that though one can oversee divers, yet it followes not that he can oversee all. We answer, that no man can oversee diverse, but by substitutes, and by substitutes he may oversee all, and so the difference will be onely in the inconvenience, and not in the unlawfulnessse, which is in the nature of the thing. You have here our Arguments, and if they be weighed without prejudice, surely you your selves will judge them to be more than probabilities. Wee have not answered to every passage of this Petition; for wee finde many tautologies. Onely one passage there is more, which we cannot passe by, to which wee answer briefly, and then wee have done.

18. *You say, that this government by Bishops, hath continued many ages without any alteration.*

If an alteration be made unto the better, what cause hath any to complain, *Nullus inquit est ad*

F

meliora

8

Pet.

Ans. 1.

meliora transire, Ambros. Epist. 31. ad Valent. It is no shame to change for the better.

2

If this government hath beene without any alteration, then it is the same every way that it was before the Reformation, and if so, then it is the very same which Antichrist had retained many hundreds of yeares. Now wee will leave it to the consideration of any indifferent man, whether he can thinke in his conscience, that it is any way probable, that Antichrist should retain the government of Christ so long in the simplicitie and puritie of it. Is it not the great designe of Antichrist, to lift up himselfe above Christ and his people? and by what meanes could he more readily effect this, than by corrupting the government? Had hee not power to doe it, seeing for many yeares hee did what he listed in the Church? All doctrines that stood in his way, he hath corrupted, and can it be thought, that he should leave government intire, according to institution, which was most opposite to his designe? Pride and arrogancie, cause men above all things to seeke to bring government under their owne wills; and who ever since the beginning of the world sweld with more pride and arrogancie than Antichrist hath done, which appears by his interdicting of Kingdomes, and bringing Princes under his feet. But now wee hope God will stirre up the spirits of the Princes of the earth, to cast off with indignation, that base bondage
and

(39)

and Babylonish tyranny, they have so long been
under ; for which, both wee and all the
Churches of G o d , both doe,
and shall cry to heaven
to hasten.

F I N I S .

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